



EAGLE EYES

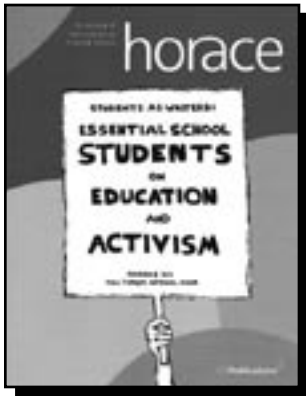
Volume 14, Number 3

News From Fall 2006 Trimester

SMALL SCHOOLS = BETTER WORLD

by Coral Ann Schmid, former Eagle Rock School student

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Communities are eager for change and are looking toward their young people to solve educational challenges. Schools continue making classes larger and harder for students to learn on an individual basis. Small schools like Eagle Rock offer opportunities to young people to expand their knowledge with structure and support. Eagle Rock was founded on values that lead students and faculty to find a healthy way to live out a desired lifestyle. We embrace values like intellectual

discipline, service to others, cross-cultural understanding, and physical fitness to keep our bodies and minds constantly striving for improvement. Eagle Rock manifests the healthiest community possible and always recognizes struggles as if they were gifts and opportunities for learning.

I have been involved in numerous discussions where we explore relevant issues of the day such as race, education, politics,

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EAGLE ROCK PLAYS CRITICAL FRIEND ROLE

by Emily Matuzek, Public Allies Fellow in the Professional Development Center

The mentor-mentee relationships at Eagle Rock are an integral part of every new student's first trimester experience. The Coalition of Essential Schools (CES), a network of schools characterized by personalization, equity, and intellectual vitality, also sees the value of mentoring relationships and organizes mentor schools to support fledgling schools within the CES network. Eagle Rock has been a member the Small Schools Project through the Coalition of Essential Schools for several years now. Eagle Rock serves in mentorship capacity with two mentee schools: Skyview Academy in Thornton, Colorado, and Odyssey – The Essential School in Seatac, Washington, on the outskirts of Seattle.

Opened in 2005 with an incoming class of 200 ninth and tenth graders, Skyview Academy was founded to be a small high school of choice within the Mapleton School District just out-

side of Denver. Skyview welcomed another new class of 9th graders this year, and will be running a full 9-12 program in 2007-2008. While the geographical proximity between Skyview and Eagle Rock was a clear benefit to their mentoring partnership, both schools share similar philosophies on education, much of which are in line with the Coalition of Essential Schools Common Principles.

On October 16th, a group of staff and students from Eagle Rock, including Michael Soguero, Dan Condon, Jen Morine, Sarah Dribin, and students Stephen Maestas and Kelly McDowell, along with Rachel Kliegman from the CES national office in California, drove down to Thornton to give some outsider perspective on Skyview's essential question, "How is a tone of decency and trust being established in the community?" These visits to the mentee school, known as Critical Friends Visits, are a require-

ment of the CES mentoring program, and are framed using the CES protocol.

Through structured classroom observations and discussion with staff and students, Eagle Rock delegates were able to offer some evidence to highlight strengths and opportunities for growth within Skyview Academy. Stephen also took away some learning about public education systems. "I learned a lot about how public schools are different [from Eagle Rock]." He cited larger class sizes and stricter limitations on the school and teacher as two of the greatest differences he observed.

Nearly one month later, on November 13th and 14th, another delegation from Eagle Rock School, including Michael Soguero, Dan Condon, Anna Ridder, Jimmy Frickey, and students Sia Yang and

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Development Center

Editor:

Dan Condon
P.O. Box 1770
2750 Notaiiah Road
Estes Park, CO
80517-1770

Phone Number:

(970) 586-0600

Fax Number:

(970) 586-4805

Website:

www.EagleRockSchool.org

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Margrette Castro
Public Allies

Dan Condon
Associate Director of
Professional Development

Susan D'Amico
Administrative Assistant

EAGLE ROCKERS REPRESENT AT FALL FORUM

by *Emily Matuzek, Public Allies Fellow in the Professional Development Center*

The first weekend in November, a constituency from Eagle Rock including staff members Michael Soguero, Dan Condon, Jen Frickey, Jimmy Frickey, Mohammed Elgazzar, Beth Ellis, Emily Matuzek and students Jesse Reyes and Saul Flores, joined over 1400 other educators and students from 39 states and six countries at the Coalition of Essential Schools Fall Forum. The Forum was held in downtown Chicago. Eagle Rock staff and students presented four of the 250 workshops offered that weekend, and facilitated several of the smaller non-workshop group discussions.

The Forum was kicked off on November 2nd by author, consultant and speaker Margaret J. Wheatley, who spoke on the "powerful transformative potential of human connections." She set a dynamic tone for the conference, and reminded us all that the transformation and revolution in education will come from connections between individuals and groups.

The next day was filled with workshops facilitated by educators and students from across the country. Jen Frickey, Dan Condon, Saul Flores and Jesse Reyes presented on "Physical Education as a Tool for Building Community and Culture," which spurred Saul and Jesse's semi-celebrity status among the educators at the Forum. Their presentation featured a brief summary of the physical education components of Eagle Rock's culture, and concluded with a brainstorming session among the attendees regarding ideas for integrating purposeful physical education into schools.

Friday was also the premiere of CES's EssentialVisions second DVD: "Student Achievement," which featured footage from various schools within the Coalition demonstrating how the CES Common Principles "demonstration of mastery," "personalization" and "commitment to entire school" are implemented. The Coalition's third and final DVD, due out in the fall of 2007, will feature Eagle Rock School.

The Forum included a variety of youth-focused workshops that were popular among both student and staff attendees. "I liked the workshop on student voice," reports Saul. "We have a lot of student voice here, and people speak up...[D]ifferent schools are having a lot of problems with that." Another youth-focused workshop popular among the Eagle Rock attendees was led by students from Harmony School in Indiana and Connections Public Charter School in Hawaii. These two schools are engaged in a mentor-mentee partnership through the Coalition of Essential Schools, and both have instituted student-led classes in their respective schools.

The Fall Forum also presented an opportunity for the Small Schools Network to touch base for a day and meet with their mentor or mentee schools. Staff and students from Eagle Rock, Skyview Academy and Odyssey – The Essential School met to reflect on their partnership, and to make plans for more individual coaching between instructors of similar disciplines. During the Small Schools Network meeting, Michael also presented to a small group on The Process to address responses to non-negotiable behaviors at Eagle Rock. Several educators in the group discussion were impressed with the formidable challenge presented to the community, and the Eagle Rockers in attendance gained perspective from listening to outside views on our challenge.

To learn more about the CES Fall Forum visit http://www.essentialschools.org/pub/ces_docs/fforum/fforum.html



Save The Date: Eagle Rock's 6th *Reunion at the Rock* will be June 22-24, 2007. Please visit http://eaglerockschool.org/our_school/alumni_friends.asp for the most up-to-date information on this event.

AN ETHIC OF SERVICE

by John Guffey, Service Learning Instructional Specialist

Portions reprinted with permission from *Horace: the journal of the Coalition of Essential Schools*, Volume 22.3.

Eagle Rock's mission is stated in two phrases, one pertaining to our work with young people and the other to our work with educators. "An Eagle Rock student has the desire and is prepared to make a difference in the world," and, "Eagle Rock has a positive effect on schools in the United States." Our emphasis on service-learning is essential to our dual missions. Our approach to service-learning embraces a range of activities extending from direct service within our school community to integrated service/academic experiences reaching far beyond the Eagle Rock campus. Programs such as Eagle Serve, chores, kitchen patrol, housekeeping, service special, Legacy Projects, many academic course activities and most community-based projects fit within the rubric of "service-learning." At Eagle Rock, service learning isn't a stand-alone program; it's the framework of everything that we do.

Eagle Rock is a value-driven school. This means that our values, embodied in the seemingly incongruent saying, "Eight Plus Five Equals Ten," are the source and purpose of ongoing conversations around curriculum, daily living, organizational decisions and more. The value of service shows up through the themes (service to others), the expectations (participating as an engaged global citizen, providing leadership for justice) and the commitments (serve the Eagle Rock and other communities through the contribution of my labors, become a steward of the planet, practice citizenship and democratic living). Eagle Rock's commitment to integrating service and community brings these ideas to life.

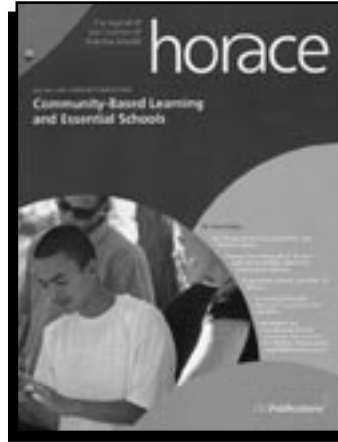
Eagle Rock students do service in the context of the school's values, where "Service to Others" is a programmatic theme. As a result, they average around 500 hours of service annually, through engagement in chores, service-learning courses, independent projects and school-wide service activities. In the process of serving, students help maintain the school as a functional community within a larger social system. Service work also applies to each student's personal growth wherein learning is directed first and foremost toward the individual's emotional and psychological development.

Service-learning at Eagle Rock lends itself to interdisciplinary study, to collaboration across the curriculum, outreach beyond the campus confines and a deepening understanding of what it means to live in community. Service-learning is all about developing partnerships and engaging students in real-life experiences where math, science, language, history, music, the arts, human performance and personal growth meet and find expression in life. Yet there is a more fundamental objective that sparks interest in service-learning at Eagle Rock School. The overarching goal of service-learning, as we have sought to make clear in this article, is the emergence of an intrinsic value and purpose, or ethic, within our students that transcends the self. In reflecting on his service experience as an elementary school tutor a current student put it this way:

"(Through tutoring,) I learned that I could make a difference in someone's life and help out other kids. . . . When I first started with service I wasn't planning on learning anything, I just wanted to get the credit out of the way, but as you can see I have learned a lot. I feel that the meaning of service isn't just helping the community, though that is a big part of it. I feel that service is about finding peace with myself and doing positive things that aren't necessary for me to survive but are good for me."

However we describe the action, whatever form engagement takes, this is the outcome that really matters when it comes to measuring the success of service-learning today.

Full text of this article may be found at www.essentialschools.org



Mark Dougherty
Sous Chef

Cynthia Elkins
Arts

Beth Ellis
Learning Resources
and Information

Eric Farmer
Language and Literature

Jacques Fournet
Wilderness & Outdoor
Education

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Michael Soguero
Director of
Professional Development

Terry Tierney
Assistant Facilities

To Be Announced
Life After Eagle Rock

Jesse Tovar
Health and Wellness
Counselor

GRADUATE PROFILE: WHERE IS SHE NOW?

by Emily Matuzek, Public Allies Fellow in the Professional Development Center

*Whitney Bell, ER-18 (Spring, 1999)
Graduated ER-26 (Spring, 2002)
Geography: Nomadic, no permanent home, but
holds a PO Box in Driggs, Idaho*

The Eagle Rock philosophy states that, "An Eagle Rock student has the desire and is prepared to make a difference in the world." Whitney Bell, Eagle Rock Graduate, has seen her share of the world since graduating in ER-26. A snowboarder since age 14, she has now made a lifestyle out of back country snowboarding across the globe; from the Patagonian ranges of South America to the Chugach Mountains of Alaska.

Whitney's passion for snowboarding was solidified three years ago, when she moved to Jackson Hole, Wyoming and began exploring backcountry snowboarding. Since then, she has taken several courses in backcountry and avalanche safety, and has created a lifestyle around her sport.

Though snowboarding motivates most of her current travels, Whitney has always had a strong desire to explore, which she attributes partly to her *Breakthroughs Abroad* trip during her time at Eagle Rock. This trip to Thailand was one of the ways that Eagle Rock School "opened her eyes to the possibilities" in the world. Her ability to feel safe with different kinds of people is another skill Whitney developed at Eagle Rock School, which served her well during her first solo adventure abroad, which began after her graduation from Eagle Rock.

With her high school graduation money, Whitney bought a round-trip ticket to Thailand. In her own words, "A six week trip to Thailand turned into a year and a half journey through Asia. During the whole plane ride, something inside me kept telling me that I was about to meet my destiny...it was going to be quite the journey." Setting up house on a small island off the coast of southern Thailand in a bungalow she built with a group of Thais, Whitney lived simply, learning how to live off of the land and sea:

– Whitney's online journal - October, 2006

"I had returned to my mother earths womb to be nurtured and have a safe place to grow and discover a different way of being. I learned how to make teas and medicines using trees from the jungle that was my backyard, I learned to catch my drinking and bathing water from the rain in large clay vessels, I learned how to eat the entire banana tree instead of just the

fruit, I learned how to gather mangos by throwing rocks into the tree, I bought squid in the evenings from the gypsies and went harpooning and set nets for fish during the day. I had created a very comfortable and satisfying life for myself in Thailand. I lived my quiet life on the beach, I worked a couple days a week as a rock climbing instructor, I was learning to speak, read, and write in Thai, and I felt that I was learning a lot from the School of Life that I could carry with me forever."

Whitney re-evaluated her plans to attend Humboldt State after returning to the United States for a couple of months to care for her father during his battle with cancer, which ended on December 23rd of 2003. Whitney explained, "The best place for me to heal was back in Thailand on the beach with my simple life. The ocean and jungle would give me the space and wisdom I needed for my healing to begin." So back to Thailand she went, and stayed there several more months until she again became restless and went exploring outside of the country.

– Whitney's online journal - October, 2006

"So I decided to walk. I walked from northern Thailand, through the jungle across Laos, and, as far as I could while still feeling safe, into China. I wore a simple white cotton outfit and sandals, I had a mosquito net, a coconut bowl, a bamboo cup, a blanket, a few candles, a small teapot, my journal, and a camera, all of which I carried in a small orange shoulder bag that monks use. I was all geared up and on my way. Along the way I stayed in Buddhist temples with orphan monks, with hill tribe villages deep in the jungle, some of which had never seen a white girl in the flesh, and met with village chiefs and priests for a drink in their huts. I was able to experience something truly outside myself and amazing."

After several more adventures, Whitney returned to her home country, a year and a half after initially leaving for her planned 6-week trip to Thailand.

She has continued to travel extensively, visiting Europe, South America, and Asia. While her sense of adventure takes her far from Eagle Rock, Whitney pops in on her old high school whenever she's in Colorado, and sends letters from time to time. She has also continued working informally on her moral and ethical code and explains that she struggled with the decision not to attend college, but has decided, "as long as I'm growing as a person and learning about the world and myself, I'm okay.... Now I'm consciously creating my decisions."



ACADEMICS IN ACTION

By Dan Condon, Associate Director of Professional Development

Innovation, creativity and relevance are foundations of the academic program at Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center. We had a great trimester in the classroom. Courses were designed and delivered with student interests, state and national standards, and 8 + 5 = 10 values in mind.

- In **Snapshot Aesthetic**, students explored black and white photography, darkroom developing, and their own aesthetic interpretation of images. They developed finesse with photography and deepened their understanding of the visual bombardment in everyday life.

- Students in **ERS Statistics** learned the tools of statistics by studying something with which they were already intimately familiar...Eagle Rock and its staff and students.

- In **Macbeth: Sound and Fury**, students explored why Shakespeare is considered the greatest writer in the English language. Students read, discussed, interpreted, rewrote and then performed Shakespeare's *Macbeth* for the school community.

- Students learned the Italian language while discovering its culture, history and influences throughout the world in **Italian For The Adventurous**. Students explored the basics of the Italian language through fun activities, popular songs, role-playing, cooking & eating, games and memorization.

- In **Risk**, students examined people from around the world who risk their lives on a daily basis for what others may take for granted. This course demanded a high level of critical thought, patience, sacrifice, and love of all its members.

- Students learned how to play new musical instruments or continued one they already played in **On Eagle's Wings**. Students learned to read and write music notation using workbooks, flash cards, ear training, and basic rhythm instruments.

- In **The World of Spanish** students learned the Spanish language while getting insights into the people, land and cultures that surround it. Students began to build their base

of Spanish vocabulary and grammar through fun activities, games, songs, role-playing and memorization.

- Students examined how the choices they make influence their bodies' health both in the short and long term in **Body Politics**. Investigations included the economic, social, and legal ramifications of these topics as they relate to what we as individuals and a society are doing to our bodies.

- How do hurricanes form? How do earthquakes occur? Do humans cause these natural disasters? Students in **(Un)Natural Disasters** sought to answer these questions as they studied the causes and effects of hurricanes and earthquakes.

- What do jousting, turkey legs, minstrels, and perspective drawing have to do with reformation? Hear ye, hear ye, all artists, architects, musicians, explorers, soldiers, and all persons of genius joined in discovering truths that challenge thinking and creating in **Renaissance Faire**.

- In **Answers Into Questions: An Exploration of the Mathematical Discovery Process** students turned their answers to math problems into new questions to be explored and truly became the directors of their own learning.

- **Rhythm and Blues** was an adventure of exploration, creation, and showcase of music. Students wrote songs, played instruments, and made conscious decisions about the value of music.

- In **Connections in Wood** students learned the art and craft of woodworking. They shaped, joined and finished useful and beautiful projects. Students initially learned basic techniques and shop practices and then worked together to complete a project that was donated to a worthy cause.

- In **Soccer Savvy: Coaching the future World Cup Stars!** students had the opportunity to refine their own soccer skills while becoming skilled coaches for the Estes Park Youth Soccer League!

- **Our People: Active Reading, Discussion, and Writing** focused primarily on actively reading novels and

short stories and writing pieces that raised the community's awareness of the experiences of those living within the American Empire.

- **The Society Club** met during ER-39 and the early stages of ER-40 in order to plan a world history course. The course was co-instructed by students and staff and was born completely from the minds of Eagle Rock students.

- In **I Got Sand In My Underwear!** students investigated the concept of sustainability and what makes cultures sustainable. The class culminated with a 5-day canyoneering trip to the Escalante River in Southern Utah.

- Do you know what makes a river healthy? Are you interested in learning how to fly-fish? In **Riverwatch** students explored rivers and their health while engaging in the art of fly-fishing.

- The participants of **Big Brother's Media Scandal** closely examined the role of media and pop culture in their daily lives. They courageously questioned many of the current politics and procedures controlling our media outlets now and in the past.

- In **Glittery Flesh: A Flash Fiction Writing Course** students practiced translating their imagination into readable words, actively reading the short works of other authors, editing their own writing, and getting their short stories published.

- Sports and activity are abundant at Eagle Rock – and they continue to take a toll on our bodies, so **Sports Injuries 101** gave students the opportunity to learn more about sports injuries, how they occur, and what students can do about them.

- You think you got problems? Wait until you hear about our problems! In **The Art of Problem Solving** students became empowered problem solvers and developed the confidence and strategies to tackle complex problems in math and in life.

To learn more about Eagle Rock's academic program visit http://eaglerockschool.org/our_school/academics.asp

COMMUNITY TACKLES NON-NEGOTIABLE PROCESS

By Michael Soguro, Director of Professional Development

On October 6, 2006, the Director of Students, Philbert Smith, took unprecedented action regarding the 13 year history of addressing non-negotiables. Throughout Eagle Rock's history, we have considered violence, sex, and use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco to be non-negotiable behavior. In the majority of cases, students would be sent home and separated from Eagle Rock School if they engaged in such behavior. Whether a student was sent home or offered a creative alternative to stay, it was the Director of Students who made the ultimate decision. After having learned of three students who had broken non-negotiables, Philbert addressed the community at a special meeting on Friday, October 6. At that meeting, Philbert challenged the community to develop a new approach to addressing non-negotiable behavior: "This trimester is an opportunity to create a process by which students are no longer sent home." We must create this process with a cross section of staff and students with an acknowledgement of what is not working and an enhancement of what is working. "Use this time to move beyond fear and blame and hold honest conversations with each other. Create a space where those who are still holding on to their own misdeeds can safely come forward and state what happened. Create a community where we respectfully and non-aggressively address the issue." With that charge from the Director of Students, the community entered into a discussion continuing to this day.

The conventional approach to addressing non-negotiable behavior has long been regarded as one of the few certainties in the midst of the flexible and oftentimes ambiguous environment we work in at Eagle Rock School. There has been a cer-

tain amount of safety and structure provided by knowing what will often happen when a student violates the non-negotiables. On the other hand, how the school has addressed the non-negotiables has also been the source of much criticism. Frequently we ask ourselves how we can assert that we are a community and, in particular, a school that works with students who have not experienced suc-



cess in traditional academic programs when we separate students who have acted out in a way that is connected to the reason they came to Eagle Rock School in the first place.

The challenge has drawn out at least two opposing views. According to one Eagle Rock graduate, "I believe that if you break a non-negotiable you should go home. This has all been laid out to you before you even begin your ER career." On the other hand a veteran student argues we need to do more to discover what led a student to break a non-negotiable, offer support, and take an approach that keeps a student here in the community.

While every member of this community has some opinion about the response to non-negotiable behavior and some opinion about the obligation of the leadership to make such decisions, it became clear very quickly that there were no processes already in place for holding such discussions and making the relevant decisions. At Eagle Rock we have a great history of community meetings where staff and students freely and respectfully voice their views but little to no history of

arriving at decisions as a result of these discussions.

At the initial special gathering where Philbert announced the decision, a student, Molly Bercow, took the lead and asked for guidelines from the community about how to conduct our work together. Some guidelines included "helping each other stick to solutions" or "involve the students who have engaged in the non-negotiable behavior." For the two weeks following that day there were numerous informal discussions as well as formal community meetings to address the situation. At one evening community meeting, we developed guidelines that built upon those we began with on October 6th. One important agreement was that while much of the

community needed to be involved we also wanted there to be a "critical mass of agreement" prior to presenting a proposal to Philbert. Through an exercise we determined that critical mass of agreement to mean about 80% of the community as long as there were 3/4 of the community present for any decision making. This was the beginning of formalizing processes by which the community could arrive at decisions. Proposals were submitted through house meetings, advisories and individual contributions. Proposals ranged from determining who would decide consequences to how consequences should be determined. There has been a theme of "restorative justice" sounded out throughout the process as well as a commitment to look at supports for a student. While restorative justice focuses on the effect behavior has on our relationships with one another rather than "rule breaking," it remained on the table that students might still be sent home as a result of this process.

MEET THE PUBLIC ALLIES TEACHING FELLOWS

by Margrette Castro, Director of the Public Allies Teaching Fellowship

Spencer Christensen, 22, grew up in Oakland and Mill Valley California. He recently graduated from Wesleyan University with a BA in sociology. Through the sociology department he developed a passion for Community Studies by working with The Oddfellows Playhouse, a youth theater in Middletown, CT. As the Service Learning Fellow, Spencer hopes to share his passion for community based action and empowerment. He plans to integrate his background in sociology to offer classes dealing with social justice and inequality.

Esperanza Gallón, 24, was born and raised in Cincinnati, OH. She attended Miami University in Oxford, OH in 2005 and graduated with a BA in Middle Childhood Education with a focus of Language Arts and Social Studies. She is a Public Allies Cincinnati 2005-2006 Alum and worked at Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati, a non-profit law firm. After her year as the Health & Wellness Fellow, she plans on opening a children's home for abused and runaway children.

Molly Goulden, 23, grew up near the Puget Sound in Washington State and is a recent graduate of Grove City College in PA. Most recently, Molly worked as an adventure based counseling facilitator at George Junior Republic in Grove City, PA where she used team-based initiatives to encourage self-empowerment among youth. As the Human Performance Center Fellow, Molly hopes to learn more about the integration of experiential education with athletics and health. She is very excited about being at Eagle Rock and finding ways to contribute to the community.

Scott James, 29, grew up in Waukesha, Wisconsin. He graduated from Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois with a BA in English and Secondary Education Certification. After teaching in a public high school for one year, he



decided to pursue some of his curiosities, working over the next five years in a variety of settings. At Eagle Rock, Scott wants to learn from students, promote creative writing in all forms, and examine various methods of teaching writing and literature.

Denise Lord, 25, originally from Alaska (but more recently from Oregon), graduated from Kalamazoo College with degrees in Spanish Language and Literature and International and Area Studies. While in school she spent four months living in, and writing an ethnographic study about, the U.S.-Mexico border region. As a Fellow, she hopes to gain more classroom experience, and looks forward to incorporating her love of cultures into the language classes at Eagle Rock.

Emily Matuzek, 23, was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota and raised in Omaha, Nebraska. During her time in college, Emily worked with students with Autism, and developed an interest in educational practices to serve atypical students. In 2005, she completed her BA in Linguistics to graduate from Rice University, and was awarded a Zeff Fellowship for independent travel. Now, as the Professional Development Center Fellow, Emily orients visiting educators to the philosophies and practices of Eagle Rock School.

Sarah Pieplow, 25, was born in Sioux Falls, SD, and graduated from Middlebury College in Vermont. Sarah serves as our Music Fellow. She holds a BA in music with focuses in native and postcolonial

literature, and French. Sarah taught middle school music on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota and interned in vocal music and English at DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx, New York. While at Eagle Rock, Sarah hopes to expand her experience and confidence in the classroom while integrating global literature and music, racial stereotyping and colonial histories.

Emily Roh, 26, is a native of Los Angeles and a graduate of UCLA where she majored in Asian American Studies. While at UCLA, she became involved with student organizing and advocated for the integration of a diversity requirement into graduation requirements. Also a Public Allies Los Angeles alum, Emily worked at the Asian Pacific American Dispute Resolution Center. As the Societies and Cultures Fellow, Emily hopes to utilize her myriad of interests and experiences, as well as her passion for social justice, to provoke critical thought in students.

Spruce Schoenemann, 25, was born in VT and grew up playing in the woods, rivers, and meadows of Pawlet. After graduating from Whitman College in Walla Walla, WA with a BA in Geology and Environmental Studies, he started working on Tall Ships in the Pacific Ocean incorporating his passion for the natural world with hands-on learning. As the Science Fellow at ERS, Spruce is excited to challenge his students to think of science not as an isolated field but as a way to go about life, with an inquisitive approach to everything.

Ben Shear, 22, grew up outside Boston, MA and attended the F.W. Parker Charter Essential School, a partner of Eagle Rock School. In June of 2006 he graduated from Dartmouth College with a BA in Philosophy and minor in Mathematics. At Eagle Rock, he is excited to work with the math

EAGLE ROCK SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS AIMING FOR INCREASE

by Dick Herb, Director of Operations

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Goal (2008)</u>
Freshman Year	\$1500	\$2000
Sophomore Year	\$1500	\$2000
Junior Year	\$1500	\$2000
Senior Year	\$2000	\$2000
Graduate School	\$4500 (\$1500/year)	\$6000 (\$2000/year)
TOTAL	\$11,000	\$14,000

You are aware of the rising cost of a college education. As I sit in Estes Park, responding to requests from Eagle Rock School graduates for funds, I have to note the appreciation I receive over and over from them. They say, "Dick, I can't tell you what a huge help these scholarships provide." Then, I see educational loan statements from those who have graduated from college and see balances ranging from \$30,000 to \$70,000! The Eagle Rock School Graduate Higher Education Fund helps pay down student loans too.

We are so proud of our graduates. Before they came to Eagle Rock, they were not expected to graduate from High School. Now look at them. They are successfully attending college but are in debt up to their ears. We have awarded over \$220,000 to date currently averaging \$70,000 to \$90,000 each year. However, there is more the Graduate Fund must do. You can help.

Make a tax-deductible donation to the Graduate Fund this Holiday season. Visit http://eaglerockschool.org/about_us/higher_ed_fund.asp for information on donating online using your credit or debit card. You can also make your personal check out to "Graduate Higher Education Fund" and mail it to Eagle Rock School, Post Office Box 1770, Estes Park, Colorado, 80717. **Any amount helps.**

ANOTHER GRADUATE TAKES FLIGHT

by Emily Matuzek, Public Allies Fellow in the Professional Development Center

As ER-40, an especially large entering class, began their personal journeys to a high school diploma this trimester, one student concluded his Eagle Rock career by receiving his Eagle Rock diploma on December 15th, 2006. Eagle Rock's 115th graduate, Bern Guthrie Lee has seen himself and Eagle Rock grow and change a great deal over the last few years.

Born in Santa Rosa, California, Bern moved to Eugene, Oregon at age 6, and has called Eugene home ever since. Though he is fond of his hometown, Bern was not making healthy choices as an adolescent in Eugene, and arrived at Eagle Rock in August of 2003. "My mom told me about Eagle Rock School, and other people who I held in respect agreed, and I wasn't doing anything, so I figured I'd give it a shot."

Bern joined Eagle Rock as a member of ER-31, and "knew I was academically capable, but I didn't know if I'd make it through [to graduation]." The path to graduation was long, but Bern decided when he arrived that he needed to make a definite decision about his time at Eagle Rock, and he decided to see it through to a diploma.

During his time here, Bern took advantage of many activities that Eagle Rock has to offer. Two of his greatest highlights were acting and singing in the *Sound of Music* in ER-33, and starring as Harry Witherspoon in the *Lucky Stiff* production of ER-36. His vocal talent also landed him a spot in the Eagle Rock a cappella choir, which has been another one of his favorite activities here.

Beyond the music program at Eagle Rock, Bern has had an opportunity to explore his future career path through an

internship. For three weeks in ER-39, Bern left the Eagle Rock community to attend the Colorado Rural Health Scholars program in Denver. Through labs, lectures, and shadowing in his internship, Bern decided certainly on medicine as his future career field. He is currently applying to several small liberal arts colleges, where he hopes to pursue a bachelor's degree in political science or in a science/neuroscience major before continuing his education at a medical school.

Though his resume and activities are impressive, one of Bern's greatest legacies is his leadership as a veteran student and his tremendous personal growth during his time at Eagle Rock. In the words of one of his peers, Heidi Bingham-Schofield, "Bern went from a sarcastic, annoying, unpleasant boy to a funny, intelligent, compassionate man." That funny, intelligent man has given generously to the Eagle Rock community, through his service on Peer Council, his time chatting with other community members in the Lodge, and his quirky sense of humor, peppered with a British accent from time to time.

While Bern will stay busy over the next 9 months earning money for college, he says he will miss Eagle Rock once he's left us, especially "the people and the mountains." Despite the "drama," Eagle Rock is a product of its people.



HARD WORK AND DEDICATION REALLY DO PAY OFF

by Meghan McGuire, Eagle Rock School Graduate

When I came to Eagle Rock at the age of 16, I wasn't happy. I hadn't been happy in a long time. I was self-destructive, angry, and frustrated.

I don't remember when exactly I lost faith in the world, but I expect it was around the time I turned the tepid age of 13. I was really angry with my parents, but more to the point, I was angry with myself. One day, I stopped going to school. Didn't drop out, just stopped going until I was expelled. Another time, my Mom and I were fighting, and when she went into a store, I kicked the windshield of her truck and cracked it. I lied and told her I hadn't done it, although it was obvious that I had. I wasn't proud of myself at all, but didn't change. Every day, I felt like my heart was going to burst.

I moved out of my parent's house and lived at friends' houses. Sometimes I slept in my car. I worked at a restaurant washing dishes at the time, and told myself that I would just do that the rest of my life. Literally, I remember thinking that very thought. Basically, when I was 15 and 16 years old, I took a long, unpleasant vacation from the real world. I hated myself. I didn't know what I wanted, but I knew what I didn't. To do anything that anyone said was good for me. I was self-destructing so fast; it was like the Indy 500. When I put my mind to something, there is no stopping me.

At Eagle Rock, I did everything that was asked of me. I followed all the rules, got up for morning exercise, and graduated faster than anyone else has. Of course, I had fun and truly enjoyed my classes, friends, and teachers, and learned a lot, but I think I could have had even more if I had really resigned myself to being there. I held myself at a distance. I was a little scared. I already had a community, I thought, the one at home in Ashland. It wasn't the day I graduated from Eagle Rock that I realized I wanted, needed to have more. Or the day after. Or the next year. For me, it took longer. But, more importantly, the skills I learned at Eagle Rock were there. It was like I put them in a little box to save for later. Filed them under "urgent" and then stacked a bunch of papers on top. I wouldn't recommend this technique. For one thing, because it takes a lot longer to graduate from college.

I just wanted to have fun with my friends at that time. There was no stopping me. And fun? I had it. Sort of. I started working at a ski resort, and when I was 19 I started competing in skateboarding, which meant a lot of travel and debauchery. Later, I started going to school. It was cool and all, but I didn't really expect to graduate. I made good grades and worked harder than anyone else, but I always expected that something better would come along. I got really depressed and started taking medication. My heart felt sick again.

One summer during school, I moved in with one of my

closest friends, Bob, who was living in Portland, to skate the famous Burnside Skate Park. He was like a brother to me, I trusted him more than my own father. Little did I know that he had developed a serious drug problem during the time I had been in school. That month was one of the worst times in my life. I could never use the bathroom in my house because there were always strangers in there snorting coke or smoking crack. Bob was dealing out of the house. He hated the fact that I didn't do drugs with him. I was the only one. It made him feel bad about himself. I just was really into skating. He started being violent and scary. I moved out.

Because I had moved out, and basically dissed the drug scene, I was alienated from all my friends. Bob started this sort-of drug cartel and essentially everyone I had been friends with since childhood, my surrogate family, was working for him and getting hooked on drugs as well. A lot of the time, I thought about giving up and just joining in with what everyone else was doing even though I knew it was wrong. But, although I didn't know it at the time, I was beginning a new journey. And none of them could stop me.

Sometimes, when I look back of this time today, I feel like finding Bob, giving him a huge sloppy kiss, and thanking him for being so horribly cruel to me. If it weren't for him, I might not have been motivated to go to Australia and study photography. I may not have done so well in school and had the opportunity to work for a girls' skateboarding magazine in Southern California. I probably wouldn't have rediscovered exercise and good health, and how these things are so important to me being happy. I feel sorry for Bob now. I was doing all this stuff and he was sitting behind bars, which are pretty effective in stopping you from going anywhere.

When a request came for me to speak at your graduation earlier this year, it was an awkward time. What some people see as a glorious milestone, a Bachelor's degree, to me meant unemployment and expulsion. No more student newspapers, no more oceanography classes, no more chatting with friends on campus, no more computer lab or photography studio. No more community. Being an active member of the student community in the last couple years I was in school had been the most rewarding experience of all. I loved, once again, being part of a group of people who were committed to going places.



"Hard Work" - Cont. from Page 9

Anyway, as you will find out later, it is hard to go back and give a speech to the students of Eagle Rock. There is no way to express how much the experience at The Rock means, or to impress Robert and Philbert to your own satisfaction.

The task of selecting words, subjects, clauses, and expressions for the speech--it seemed impossible. I did my best. Everyone was so nice. I didn't think I did well enough. I was nervous. I forgot a lot of what I wanted to say. Later, I realized what my problem was. Nothing I could have said would ever be good enough, not for you, Eagle Rock. Nothing that I can ever do will be good enough for you, in my mind. To me, there is nothing on earth more valuable than what I received at Eagle Rock, and nothing that I could give back could possibly equal what I received: a chance to change. Values that filled my sails as I navigated through turbulent seas. Integrity. Hope. Skills. Love.

While I was at The Rock, I got a call from one of the hundreds of jobs I had applied for online in the month after graduation. Up to that point, I hadn't even had an interview (I left this fact out of my graduation speech). I was determined to find a position in which I could use the skills I learned while going to college as a photojournalism major, but it was getting down to the wire. I was a couple days away from working at the Cheesecake Factory.

The call was from a newspaper on the Oregon Coast, so I came back from Colorado. The next day I drove to Ashland, got one hour of sleep, and then continued to Tillamook--the "Land of Cheese, Trees, and Ocean Breeze." And the interview? Nailed it. I couldn't even believe what was coming out of my mouth. It was amazing.

So now, nearly two months later, I am writing this letter to you from my home computer. Behind the computer is a window, and through the window I can see the beautiful Nehalem River, right in my backyard. Salmon are spawning now, and every once in a while, one will jump and belly flop back in. I am the North Tillamook County reporter for a weekly newspaper called the Headlight Herald, known locally as the "Head-less Herald." I do most of my work at home, but go into the office on Monday and Tuesday.

This week, my first front-page story is being published. It is about a 78 year old hunter who got lost in the woods. He grew up here, working at the mill, and knows the woods like the back of his hand. He got lost another time a couple years ago, and searchers found him hunkered down under a log, with brush on top of him, planning on spending the night.

Needless to say, this place is filled with characters. I go to all the city council and planning commission meetings. When I have time off, I go surfing at one of the most beautiful beaches on earth, five minutes from my house. I feel like my job is important. I feel important. I feel proud. Content. I feel happiness like I never have before. There were many times I felt like giving up, but now I know why I didn't. Life is funny like that.

Yesterday, at work, I received a check for \$5,500 in the mail, signed by Dick and Robert. I sent it right off to the U.S. Department of Education. Right now, I feel like the luckiest woman on earth. And because of you, I know that there is nothing that can stop me.

To learn more about our Graduate Higher Education Fund please visit http://eaglerockschool.org/about_us/higher_ed_fund.asp

"Community" - Cont. from Page 6

As time went on, frustrations mounted in the community. Some resented that students who had broken non-negotiables were participating in the community life and had not been addressed regarding their behavior. Others took a long haul approach and were committed to talking about the deepest issues and values of the community as a way to get to the root of the community's behavior. On Thursday, November 16th, classes were suspended and the entire community went through a day organized to address and make each other aware of what was most important to each of us individually. The Eagle Rock family heard each other speak of love, family, education and friends. Parallel to this day of dialogue, we made the opportunity available to choose

from a number of options to address the non-negotiable behavior. As a result, the community achieved the high critical mass of agreement to have house teams, with floating council members from outside of the house, gather to determine responses to a student's non-negotiable behavior from that house.

Since that time all houses have met to either conduct a process to address behaviors, or they have clarified some of the details of that process for their house. We are very much in the middle of this process as this article is being written. It is far too early to tell whether we have really risen to the occasion to deal with root issues around causes of non-negotiable behavior. However, there are clear signs that the community is beginning

to see the situation that has formerly been the sole discretion of the Director of Students in a new light. Rather than view this solely as a conflict between seriousness of purpose and providing a nurturing community, many new ideas have emerged: What is the nature of democratic governance at Eagle Rock School? What are the root issues that these discussions are connected to? How can we continuously learn from our experiences?

While the leadership resists pressures to provide an authoritative solution, we are all engaged in facing the problem collectively. The outcome of this process may have less to do with the non-negotiables themselves and more to do with how we govern ourselves in healthy and productive ways.

"Small Schools" - Cont. from Page 1

immigration, and poverty. We expand on topics like this daily, learning new methods to process information. We improve our language so we can more clearly understand each other and be able to use a multitude of opinions. Time for reflection at Eagle Rock is not forgotten. A portion of the schedule is intentionally meant for giving students and staff time to re-process the learning experience.

As I am pushed with lessons of patience, honesty, and fortitude, I remember there are the foundational values that will accelerate my personal growth. As I take Eagle Rock's tools, I will use them in other educational environments to help me better understand my surroundings. Struggling to create safe environments can be the first major step for all schools. I am developing as an individual through Eagle Rock. I get the opportunity to work on myself in the safe and supportive environment of Eagle Rock's learning community.

Small schools everywhere continue to push educational limits and are creating inspired young people with aspirations of making changes and nurturing healthy communities across the globe. One person can make a difference. Students who dare to dream beyond what they're told and ask more from their education deserve small schools. To take a young person's dream and to accessorize it with tools gives that person the chance to fly and succeed. The generation of today is looking for a base of knowledge to lead them to their own successes, not someone to spoon-feed us.

Eagle Rock is an eclectic and balanced community with teachers, students, and visiting educators learn-

ing from each other. We are told to come in with open minds. Everyone is coming in with a bit of knowledge from many different places. We understand that a good balance of class and social time offers different environments for everybody. If we learn as a community together, we become closer in achieving our dreams as one. I learned time management through my advisory, I gained endless amounts of honest communication skills in my classes, and I started to care for others while living with people from all walks of life.

Eagle Rock has given me the skills and purpose to achieve my highest dreams. My goals to sail around the world and write for National Geographic are honored and nurtured at Eagle Rock.

Young people everywhere need support and a sense of guidance from passionate educators who strive to listen and understand. Educators start spreading support as peers learn to guide one another through these times. Instructors that took that extra ten minutes to explain a problem more in depth are the ones that made the difference. I've been blessed with an education that I am grateful for and very proud of. I am confident that my contribution can make a positive difference in our fragile environment. I hope to work at an orphanage in the Himalayas and spend time doing service in all the local communities in which I live. Join me in supporting small schools and their mission to challenge our generation to positively impact our world.

Learn more about the Coalition of Essential Schools at <http://www.essentialschools.org/>

"An Critical Friend" - Cont. from Page 1

Brizeida Pina flew out to Seatac to visit Odyssey – The Essential School for another Critical Friends Visit. The Odyssey School also opened in 2005 as a small charter high school in the Highline Public School District. Like many CES schools, Odyssey was born out of the conversion from a large public high school into several smaller high schools occupying the original comprehensive high school building. The visitors from Eagle Rock and the CES national office were asked by Joan Ferrigno, the principal of Odyssey, "What evidence do you find that shows how students at Odyssey – the Essential School are learning to use their minds well?" Again, through the CES Critical Friends Visit protocol and observations in and out of the classroom,

the mentoring team was able to offer some fresh eyes to the staff and students at The Odyssey School, and left them with written feedback and observations from classrooms. Odyssey principal, Joan Ferrigno was enthusiastic about Eagle Rock's "honest and thought provoking feedback," especially from Sia and Brizeida, who she felt "modeled an excellent work ethic and thoughtful participation for our students."

The mentoring partnerships between Eagle Rock and our mentee schools continue beyond the Critical Friends Visits. Eagle Rock welcomed a delegation of 10 students from Skyview to our all-day Community Meeting on November 16th. Skyview students observed and participated in our discussion of what's most im-

portant in our community, and how our response to non-negotiable behavior aligns with our values. One Skyview student remarked about the "incredible sense of community and respect" he observed among the Eagle Rock Students, and all of the Skyview students were challenged to think of something from Eagle Rock that they would like to implement in their home school. Odyssey – The Essential School also brought a group of staff and students out to Eagle Rock for a couple days in the beginning of December to shadow students in classes and exchange more ideas about how both schools can strengthen their respective programs. For more information about the CES mentoring program, please visit www.essentialschools.org.

"Meet the Allies" - Cont. from Page 7

Instructional Specialist in designing an alternative math curriculum based upon solid conceptual and practical understandings, which he believes all students can attain.

Suzanne Sustaita, 28, is from Connecticut and graduated from the Hartford Art School at the University of Hartford in 2005 with a BFA in Photography and a minor in Art History. Suzanne was a member of the Public Allies Connecticut class of 2006. At Eagle Rock, Suzanne hopes to strengthen the photography curriculum by applying her knowledge and passion for the subject.

Marli Williams, 23, grew up in the Northwest sub-

urbs of Chicago, IL. She is a graduate of the University of New Hampshire where she received a BA in Outdoor Education. As the Outdoor Education Fellow, Marli works with the new student wilderness orientation program and offers academically integrated adventure activities throughout the year. Marli is really excited to expand her knowledge base as an instructor and is looking forward to being apart of creating opportunities for students to make positive changes in their lives.

Learn more about the Public Allies Teacher Fellowship Program at <http://www.publicallies.org/eaglerock/>



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